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SUBJECT: TERRORISM CASES ADVANCE IN JORDAN'S SECURITY COURT

REF: A. AMMAN 1783

[B](#). AMMAN 2094

[C](#). 04 AMMAN 5278

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) Five separate terrorism cases moved forward in Jordan's State Security Court in recent weeks. The prosecution in the case of nine Zargawi affiliates accused of plotting against the U.S. Embassy and GOJ targets last year called several witnesses. Muammar Jaghbir, accused of involvement in the assassination of USAID official Laurence Foley, pleaded "not guilty." An attorney for the 16-member Tantawi cell from northern Jordan, who authorities say plotted to kill foreigners and GOJ officials, won the Court's approval to meet his clients one-on-one. The Court on April 4 upheld its previous guilty verdict in the case of nine men charged with plotting against U.S. and Israeli tourists during Jordan's millennial celebrations. Finally, the trial of Mustafa Siyyam, charged with the car bomb attack against a Jordanian intelligence official, proceeded on April 3. End Summary.

PROSECUTION WITNESSES TESTIFY AGAINST JAYUSI CELL

[1](#)2. (U) The trial of nine men headed by Azmi Jayusi, accused of plotting to attack the U.S. Embassy, General Intelligence Directorate (GID), and Prime Ministry in Amman, proceeded this month (ref A). Jordanian authorities allege that the Zargawi-linked plotters intended to carry out vehicle-borne chemical bombs against its targets. The prosecution called several witnesses in separate sessions on March 30 and April 16. Two testified that the cell's ring leader, Azmi Jayusi, bought chemical materials and laboratory equipment from them. Others witnesses testified that Jayusi, and on occasion another defendant, Husni Sharif, sought to rent from them their properties in Amman and Irbid, or to buy trucks or cars they had for sale. The witnesses said that Jayusi gave each of them a different name and claimed on various occasions to be a merchant or a manufacturer of perfumes or sweets. All witnesses identified Jayusi when asked in court to point him out from among the other defendants.

[1](#)3. (U) Meanwhile, the Court ordered the prison doctor to examine Jayusi after his attorney claimed his client was suffering from high blood pressure. Another defense attorney told the court that his clients had been harassed and mistreated in prison; the court responded by sending the prison administrator a request to treat inmates in accordance with the law.

JAGHBIR PLEADS NOT GUILTY IN FOLEY MURDER

[1](#)4. (U) Muammar Ahmad Jaghbir, accused of involvement in the 2002 assassination of USAID official Laurence Foley, pleaded not guilty to the charges during his re-trial in the State Security Court on March 14 (ref A). Jaghbir is also standing trial in a separate case (along with Abu Musab al-Zargawi in absentia) for his alleged role in bombing the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad in 2003.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY WINS RIGHT TO SEE CLIENTS IN PRIVATE

[1](#)5. (U) An attorney representing members of the 16-member Tahawi cell, currently on trial in the State Security court for plotting terrorist attacks against GOJ and foreign targets (ref B), won the right to see his clients in private, on a one-on-one basis, a decision that may pave the way for other attorneys to meet with their clients away from prison guards' watchful eyes.

[1](#)6. (U) Attorney Zuhair Abul Ragheb told a reporter that he voiced his concerns to the judge on March 28, noting his experience the previous week at the Swaga Correctional and Rehabilitation Center. "Last week I visited my clients at prison but could not talk to them properly because they were

behind wire-mesh windows and there were many other lawyers talking to their clients at the same time," Abul Ragheb said.

Judge Bqour immediately ordered officials at Swaqa, who were present in the courtroom, to allow the lawyer to meet his clients privately.

17. (SBU) Earlier in the month, two prosecution witnesses testified that they had received threatening phone calls allegedly linked to members of the cell. Fatmeh Rawashdeh told the court an anonymous person called her several times, ordering her to inform her brother-in-law, a GID officer, to "keep away from Muslims." (The group is charged with targeting intelligence officers in Irbid who they believed kept watch over a mosque there.) May Saleh, secretary to journalist (and Post contact) Ureib al-Rintawi, testified that she received a phone threat from an anonymous person saying Rintawi "better behave, or else." The prosecution says the cell targeted Rintawi because he criticized terrorists during one of his television programs. (Note: Rintawi told poloff last month that despite the threat against him, he received no communication from the security services, much less any protection, inquiring about his situation. He said he only learned about the arrests in the newspaper and of the trial when his secretary was contacted to testify. End note.)

MILLENNIAL PLOTTERS CONVICTED, AGAIN

18. (U) The State Security Court on April 4 upheld its previous guilty verdict in the case of nine extremists convicted in a plot to kill American and Israeli tourists during Jordan's millennial celebration in 1999 (ref C). The Appeals Court had asked the lower court to review for a second time their guilty verdict on the grounds the charges against the men may have been dismissed under a general amnesty issued by King Abdullah in March 1999. The judge said he upheld the verdict because the "final and decisive phases" of the plot -- planning of which dated back to 1996 -- were hatched after the royal amnesty was issued. During the heavily guarded court session, the defendants cursed the judge as the verdict was announced. "Whoever rules against God's will is a criminal, you are God's enemy!" screamed Osama Sammar, who, along with Khader Abu Hoshier, had been sentenced to death in 2000. The verdict almost certainly will be appealed.

SIYYAM RE-TRIAL PROCEEDS

19. (U) The re-trial of Mustafa Siyyam, sentenced to death in absentia in April 2003 for his role in a car bombing that targeted a Jordanian intelligence officer in 2002, proceeded on April 3 (ref B). Two prison inmates, incarcerated with Siyyam at Swaqa Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, testified that Siyyam looked tired and absent-minded when he was brought to the Jordanian prison in June 2003 after his detention in Iraq. Siyyam, who has pleaded not guilty to the charges, claimed that his confession was extracted under duress. He also previously claimed that he was tortured by U.S. personnel at Abu Ghreib prison in Iraq.

10. (U) Minimize considered.

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